

He also represented student protesters at Southern University during the civil rights movement and countless indigent defendants, and he challenged voter discrimination practices throughout the South.

I was grateful to have the opportunity to speak with Dr. Attorney Johnnie Jones on Veterans Day to thank him for his incredible service to our people in America.

On his birthday, he celebrated with friends, family, and good Louisiana seafood. Today, let's all thank Dr. Jones for his great advice that he shares with us, which is: "You have to deal with the past, and you have to deal with the history. You have to read and understand so we don't repeat the past."

Let's build better. Let's build a future for everyone.

Please join me in wishing Dr. Attorney Johnnie Jones, Sr., a happy 102nd birthday.

#### BORDER CROSSINGS FUEL OTHER CRISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss an issue that is an unprecedented issue, the border crisis that we are facing in this Nation that is fueling other crises: national security, public safety, health, and fentanyl, all a burden on the hard-working taxpayers and the American people.

On October 3, following court orders, the Biden administration said that it would reinstate the remain in Mexico policy by mid-November. I rise today to point out that we are now in December, and no such action has been taken.

Since President Biden has taken office, CBP has encountered more illegal immigrants than in 2018, 2019, and 2020 combined. In October, 164,303 illegal immigrants crossed the border, the highest number in recorded history and 80 percent higher than the previous record for the month of October, which is from October 1999.

Mr. Speaker, 1.7 million people have crossed the border in the past year, which is roughly the same as the population of President Biden's home State of Delaware and Vice President HARRIS' home city of San Francisco combined.

These border crossings are creating many issues throughout our country. First, let's talk about safety and security.

In the first month of this fiscal year, October, CBP arrested over 680 individuals with criminal convictions and dozens of known gang members, including 23 members of MS-13. That is in just 1 month. Multiple individuals on the FBI terrorist watch list have also been encountered over the last year.

As a native New Yorker who was just blocks away from Ground Zero on 9/11,

I can tell you that I was shaken to my core by reports that Panama was in the position of having to deny over 52 al-Qaida affiliates at their border who were coming to the United States.

Last month, a 24-year-old man, who posed as an unaccompanied minor while illegally crossing our border, entered this country and then murdered his foster parents in their Florida home.

When is enough going to be enough for this administration and for my colleagues in the House?

Let's talk about fentanyl. Every Member of this Chamber knows the widespread pain plaguing our communities. We all have constituents who are suffering from the loss of life caused by an abundance of drugs being smuggled into our country. Counterfeit narcotics laced with fentanyl are being mass-produced in Mexico with chemicals from China and are streaming over our open borders. The DEA is telling us so. They say that 80 percent of fentanyl in the United States has come over our borders, smuggled by the cartels.

In the first month of this fiscal year, 2022, October, CBP seized over 1,000 pounds of fentanyl. That means that in just 1 month, CBP seized enough fentanyl to kill 236,775,024 people, American citizens. The U.S. recently recorded its highest number of drug overdose deaths in a 12-month period, surpassing 100,000 for the first time.

Over 170 people overdosed on drugs during the first 9 months of 2021 in my community of Staten Island, and I know other Members have similar stories, too. Fentanyl was present in about 80 percent of the completed toxicology reports for the 2020 fatal overdoses in Staten Island.

So I ask my colleagues, whose side are you on? Are you on the side of the drug cartels, or are you on the side of the American people?

I visited the border. I met with the CBP agents. I rode with the Texas Department of Public Safety. I can't say the same for our President, can't say the same for our Vice President, can't say the same for the Speaker.

Despite all this, the Biden administration has halted the construction of barriers while American taxpayers still foot the bill for a contract that has been in place. We are paying every month, yet the barriers aren't going up.

Instead, they want to further incentivize illegal border crossings by giving illegal immigrants \$450,000 of taxpayer money, a total slap in the face to the taxpayers who bust their butts and pay taxes and expect this government to perform properly.

The Biden administration now, in its misguided Build Back Better—or, I should say, build back broke—bill, wants to reward illegal immigration by granting mass amnesty, free college tuition, and childcare to those who unlawfully crossed.

As a daughter of immigrants, I think it is incredibly important that we en-

force our laws and give people opportunity, but let's make sure they are doing it the right way.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF NAVY SEAMAN SECOND CLASS CHARLES LOUIS "SONNY BOY" SAUNDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Navy Seaman Second Class Charles Louis "Sonny Boy" Saunders of Winnie, Texas, in my district.

Seaman Saunders was serving aboard the USS *Oklahoma* on the morning of December 7, 1941. Tragically, the *Oklahoma* sustained 429 casualties during the attack on Pearl Harbor, claiming Mr. Saunders' life that morning. After eight decades, 80 years, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, or DPAA, has identified Seaman Saunders' remains.

This year, he will be reinterred in his hometown on the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Mr. Saunders was born to Mortimer Alvin and Melina Falke Saunders on October 16, 1923. He was the sixth child and one of four boys. His oldest brother, Adam, passed away at just 13 months old. He grew up with his sisters Lillie Mae, Mary Alice, Sadie Lee, and Anna Belle, along with brothers Sidney "Buddy" Edward and Mortimer Virgil.

The Great Depression led to difficult times as their father worked in construction and labored in the rice fields to provide for his family while his mother cared for the home and raised their children. Mr. Saunders' youngest sister, Anna Belle, always spoke of her brother's compassion and how he sacrificed so that she could have shoes for her daily walk to school.

His kind, caring, and playful nature fueled his ambition to serve our Nation. On November 23, 1940, 1 month after his 17th birthday, he joined the United States Navy. Not only did he possess a deep desire to serve our country, but he also had a great determination to make a better life for his parents and his siblings.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese aircraft launched a surprise attack on the American fleet of battleships that were moored at Pearl Harbor, thrusting the United States into the Second World War.

After Seaman Saunders' warship capsized because of the damage from the multiple Japanese torpedoes, his whereabouts were unknown. According to a casualty roster of the *Oklahoma* compiled 2 weeks after the attack, Seaman Saunders' status was labeled as "missing" but then later was amended to be "killed in action."

Those who perished aboard the USS *Oklahoma* were buried at two different cemeteries: the Halawa and Nu'uano Naval Cemeteries in Hawaii. Most of the remains were recovered during salvage operations but were unable to be

identified before their interment, and therefore, they were buried as “unknowns.”

In recognition of his service, Seaman Saunders was awarded a Purple Heart for military merit and three ribbons for American Defense, American Campaign, and the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign.

As the last living sibling, Anna Belle was committed to bringing her brother home and laying him to rest at the gravesite that their parents prepared for him those years and years ago at Fairview Cemetery in Winnie, Texas.

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In 2015, the DPAA was given authority to exhume the unknown remains of these servicemen associated with the USS *Oklahoma* and to reexamine them. It was at this point that the military contacted Anna Belle, his younger sister. She worked tirelessly to gather and provide DNA of family members to help identify her brother's remains.

Unfortunately, Anna Belle passed away on July 19, 2019, but she never lost hope that her brother would one day return home. She prayed her unwavering mission would be continued by those who survived her, and it was. On February 11, 2021, the Saunders family received word that their long-lost relative had finally been found and identified.

Mr. Speaker, Seaman Second Class Charles “Sonny Boy” Saunders’ arrival in Winnie, Texas, will be welcomed by many relatives, friends, and fellow patriots; finally coming home. On the 80th anniversary of his passing, Mr. Saunders will be buried alongside his parents with full military honors.

May God continue to bless this family for their long record of service and sacrifice to our great Nation.

#### USING EMPLOYER-SPONSORED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO PAY OFF STUDENT DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a national problem that has continued for years; that is the rise in student loan debt. Over 40 million borrowers hold outstanding student loan balances that exceed \$1.7 trillion. The average borrower holds about \$39,000 in student debt.

This is unacceptable. We hear talk about pie-in-the-sky policies, like debt forgiveness, that come maybe from the other side of this Capitol or Chamber, what we call the U.S. Senate. These are not just pie-in-the-sky proposals; they are BS. They are not going to happen. It is time that Members of this body talk about the solutions that all of us here helped implement. We actually addressed the student debt issue.

It is through legislation I led with my colleague, Congressman SCOTT

PETERS of California, that was signed into law by President Trump last year, that would allow employers to make tax-free student loan payments of up to \$5,250 per year to each employee who holds an eligible student loan, lowering payroll taxes both for employers and the employees.

This public-private partnership model makes student loan payments eligible for employer-sponsored educational assistance programs, just like tuition assistance has been for years.

In fact, my good friends at Chegg—and I have got four public universities in my district, four private universities in my district, and a handful of community colleges in my district—every one of those students, like my three kids who are in college right now and grad school, knows what Chegg is. That is where they are getting their books. It is a cost-effective, private-sector approach to lower the cost of textbooks for kids nationwide.

Well, the people of Chegg know how important student debt is, because they have actually paid back over a million dollars in student debt for their employees. They have actually taken advantage of this program that we all passed in a bipartisan way to address this \$1.7 trillion problem.

Every employer out there should do what Chegg has done and take advantage of the tax provisions that are in place and were put in place by Republicans and Democrats and signed into law by President Trump. Let's make sure that you use this as an effective recruitment tool and retention tool in this economy.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking my colleagues to help get the word out to our employers across this great country to use what is already available to them and their employees who have student debt. They can use this student loan debt benefit to help recruit more workers. They can use it to retain more talent. They can use it to give their employees financial freedom and make a real difference in their lives by reducing their student debt and by reducing the \$1.7 trillion in debt that we have in this country, which outnumbers all auto and credit card debt combined.

Help the employees. Help America. Let's get this economy back on track.

#### WE NEED THE ESSENTIAL CAREGIVERS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the colead of H.R. 3733, the Essential Caregivers Act, to tell the stories of Americans across the country who are desperately calling on Congress to immediately act on this bill.

I also thank Representative LARSON, who is my colead, for helping me sponsor this bill. I am grateful to him for his leadership and his compassion.

I have shared many heartbreaking and tragic stories before in this Cham-

ber, and I will continue to do so until there is action on my bipartisan Essential Caregivers Act. Just as so many families who were forced to helplessly watch as their loved ones rapidly declined physically and mentally in long-term care facilities, I am not going to give up this fight. I am just getting started.

First and foremost, the Essential Caregivers Act is a critically important bill that would ensure the policies that were put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic never happen again. In my home State of New York, and many States across the Nation, families were literally shut out from their loved ones living in long-term care facilities, neglecting the basic needs of their loved ones at these facilities. These decisions to isolate long-term care facility residents were fatal and will have long-lasting impacts.

Today, I am here to share stories that go beyond my home State of New York. I will begin by sharing a story from Alaska. This is an excerpt from the book entitled “Protecting Them to Death.” This is a book that was compiled and written by my great constituent, Karla Abraham-Conley, who lost her mother in a long-term care facility.

This is an excerpt from the book compiled using COVID-19 isolation stories. The first one is a story from Denise Brown:

“Ohana” means “family” in Hawaiian and that no one is left behind. This word means a lot to us. My mother's skilled nursing facility was an hour away from her home and ours, so they became her pseudo ohana.

She was moved there by the State of Alaska when an employee brought COVID-19 into her extended care facility. She was able to see us through a window once or twice a week because she was on the ground floor at that time. We talked every day on the phone, except for those days when she was too weak to answer my call. Last year on her birthday, when she was in the final skilled nursing facility that the State had moved her to, we cooked her dinner outside her window, we sent it in to her via a CNA. My boys built her rock towers, and we sang “Happy Birthday” through the window. But the moment they moved my mother to the second floor, I think she gave up hope of getting stronger, of seeing the faces she loved through the window. It was her one connection to us that still seemed real and wasn't through a virtual visit. We lost her on January 12, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Brown could still be here with us today if she had had access to an essential caregiver.

The next two stories come to us from Arizona. The first story is from Linda Thompson, also featured in the book “Protecting Them to Death”:

My husband is in a memory care facility. He no longer speaks as a direct result of the isolation during the pandemic. He uses a walker. Because he was confined to his room, he was unable to exercise his legs. All his physical abilities have declined significantly. Change of any kind takes a toll on dementia residents. Knowing that he spent 17 days in a sterile room in the COVID-19 ward of his facility is heartbreaking. He had very few symptoms but lost 20 pounds. I am still praying this never happens again.